DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 044 797 EA 003 150

AUTHOR Persell, Caroline H.
TITLE An Evaluation of a Strategy for Bringing Social Science to Bear on Organizational Decision-Making.
INSTITUTION American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Apr 70
NOTE 25p.; Preliminary version, "Ideas from Social Science Applied to Organizational Policy Making: A Case Study of AERA," presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 2-6, 1970)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.35
DESCRIPTORS Decision Making, *Educational Research, *Evaluation, Organization, *Organizations (Groups), *Research Utilization, *Symposia

ABSTRACT

To incorporate ideas from the sociology of science into the policy-making activities of the American Educational Research Association, a colloquium was held consisting of AERA planning committee members, executive officers, council members, and scholars from the sociology of science. This colloquium was specifically designed to help the planning committee members make recommendations to the council. Among the major ideas coming from these meetings were the following: Two resulted in favorable action--new AERA publications, and improving relations with the Federal Government: two are pending additional information--improving the research climate in schools of education, and initiating research in educational development: and one appears to have been permanently tabled-association reorganization. Committee members indicated that the colloquium satisfactorily accomplished its objective of providing ideas to the committee. (RA)

ED 044797
EA 003 150

N-Y

AN EVALUATION OF A STRATEGY FOR BRINGING SOCIAL SCIENCE TO BEAR ON ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION-MAKING*

Caroline H. Persell**
Bureau of Applied Social Research
Columbia University
New York, N. Y. 10025

April 1970

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

* A preliminary version of this report was given at the 1970 AERA meeting as the paper entitled, "Ideas from Social Science Applied to Organizational Policy Making : A Case Study of AERA."

This report was supported by a grant from the U. S. Office of Education, through the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

** With the advice of Sam D. Sieber, Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

ED 044797

AN EVALUATION OF A STRATEGY FOR BRINGING SOCIAL SCIENCE TO BEAR ON ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Caroline H. Persell
Bureau of Applied Social Research
Columbia University
New York, N. Y. 10025

April 1970

I. PURPOSE AND METHODS

The purpose of this report is to evaluate a method of bringing ideas from the sociology of science to bear on American Educational Research Association (AERA) policy-making. The method under study is a Colloquium of scholars in the sociology of science. The Colloquium was the final phase of a strategy for bringing social science ideas to bear on the problems of research on education, particularly those problems which might be within the control of a major professional association in the field.[1]

At the two day November 1968 Colloquium, scholars[2] presented papers and discussed ideas with AERA leaders -- AERA Council members, Long Range

---

[1]For the results of earlier phases of the strategy, see Ronald G. Corwin and Maynard Seider, "Patterns of Educational Research: Reflections on Some General Issues," one of the papers prepared for the Colloquium.

[2]The following papers were presented: Corwin and Seider, op. cit.; Garvey, William D., Carnot Nelson, and Nan Lin, "A Preliminary Description of Scientific Information Exchange in Educational Research"; Hagstrom, Warren O., "Educational Researchers, Social Scientists, and School Professionals"; Lingwood, David A., "Interpersonal Communication, Scientific Productivity, and Invisible Colleges: Studies of Two Behavioral Science Research Areas"; Paisley, William, "The Role of Invisible Colleges"; and Storer, Norman W., "The Organization and Differentiation of the Scientific Community: Basic Disciplines, Applied Research, and Conjunctive Domains."

Planning Committee (LRPC) members, and executive officers.[3]

The Colloquium will be evaluated on two dimensions: (1) the applicability of social science ideas for the situation AERA confronts, and (2) the impact of the Colloquium on the governing bodies of AERA, as mediated by the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC).

The planned sequence of decision-making for AERA was as follows: LRPC would meet several times after the Colloquium and draft a report with policy recommendations for the organization. Then the AERA Council would meet to consider the LRPC recommendations. Finally, appropriate actions might result from their decisions.

We used the following research methods in this evaluation. First, the researcher observed AERA Executive Committees and Council meetings, and a meeting of the AERA Federal Advisors. Where appropriate, these meetings were tape recorded. Second, the researcher did a content analysis of papers presented at the Colloquium, the "Recapitulation of the Colloquium," and of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) Interim Report. Third, after hypothesizing some relationships between the Colloquium and

---

[3]Besides the paper-givers, the following people attended the Colloquium: Simon Marcson, Sociologist of Science, Rutgers University; Lee Burchinal, Bureau of Research, Office of Education; Arthur Lumsdaine, Psychologist, University of Washington, observer from the American Psychological Association; John Mayor, from the American Association for the Advancement of Science; Ray Norris, Office of Education; Theodore Parsons, University of California, Berkeley, observer from the American Anthropological Society; Garry Walz, University of Michigan, ERIC Clearinghouse on Personnel Services; LRPC members: Charles Bidwell, University of Chicago; John Goodlad, UCLA; Nate L. Gage, Stanford University; Leslie McLean, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Richard Schutz, Southwest Regional Laboratory for Research and Development; B. Othanel Smith, University of Illinois; AERA Council: Frank Besag, State University of New York at Buffalo; David R. Krathwohl, Syracuse University; Robert M.W. Travers, Western Michigan University; AERA Staff Members: Richard Dershimer, Executive Officer; Gary Hanna, Assistant for Professional Affairs.

the LRPC Report on the basis of the content analysis, the researcher interviewed members of the LRPC, to see if they perceived the ideas as related to the Colloquium.[4]

This evaluation attempts to trace the progress of certain ideas from the Colloquium through the decision-making structure in AERA. The process is analogous, although surely not identical with, tracing radioactive isotopes through the body, to see what happens to them at different places.

II. MAJOR THEMES FROM THE COLLOQUIUM AND THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING

Several themes emerged from the Colloquium which seemed relevant to AERA policy makers. Very briefly these include:[5]

A. The Need for a Stronger Community of Scholars,

1. to provide adequate social rewards for people doing research on education,
2. to improve the communications mechanisms within the field of research on education, specifically at the annual meeting and through Association publications,
3. to support "basic" research in the face of strong pressures for research with immediate applicability.

B. The Importance of Development People in educational research. Efforts were made to define "development," and

---

[4]All six members of the LRPC who attended meetings were interviewed, except the Chairman. He was on sabbatical and out of the country or otherwise unavailable during the time of the interviews.

[5]For more details see the "Recapitulation of the Colloquium" or the actual papers presented at the Colloquium, which AERA hopes to have published.

there was strong sentiment that this important new breed must be recognized and included in the AERA.

C. The Importance of the Climate for Research in Schools of Education for fostering or impeding research on education.

D. The Importance of increasing the Understanding and Support of the Larger Community for research on education, particularly that of the federal government.

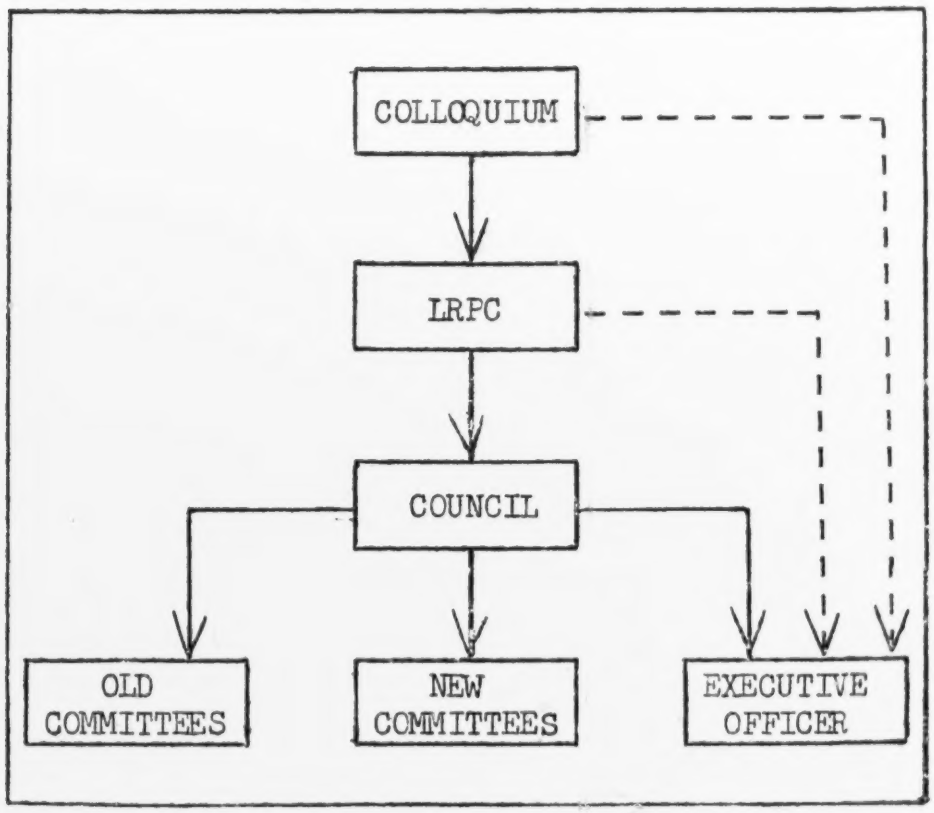
E. AERA was urged to write a scenario for itself -- conceptualizing its long-term objectives and developing strategies for achieving them.

Clearly there were ideas in the Colloquium which are relevant to the situation AERA faces. In terms of the first dimension for evaluating the Colloquium, then, we can conclude that the Colloquium did yield applicable ideas for the problems faced by AERA.

The structure of decision-making within the AERA can best be described schematically (Figure 1). The Colloquium was designed to precede and to assist the LRPC in its deliberations and recommendations. The LRPC in turn was to report to the AERA Council, which has the constituted authority to act on their recommendations. We will consider the transmission of ideas at each step in this decision-making process, and then make some observations about the overall process.

FIGURE 1

THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING WITHIN THE AERA



III. "IMPACT" OF THE COLLOQUIUM ON THE LRPC

We will examine what happened to each of the main themes which emerged from the Colloquium when they were considered by the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC).

A. Community of Scholars

1. The LRPC recommended that a special membership category, that of Fellow, be established. By this they meant a membership category signifying some degree of excellence in furthering the work of the field, as is practiced by other scholarly associations, such as the American Psychological Association.[6] The LRPC member who, with someone else,

---

[6]See pp. 7-13 of the LRPC Interim Report for more details on this recommendation.

formulated this idea said, "I hesitate to say that it was a result of the Colloquium, although the Colloquium did discuss ideas about the reward structure of the field and socialization patterns. The Colloquium helped generate more ideas and clarified other ideas."

2. Regarding publications. One LRPC member thought "the publications recommendations are the clearest example of the influence of the Colloquium." The LRPC report had a number of specific recommendations about publications.[7] One of these was the recommendation that a critical Review of Educational Research be started. Several LRPC members commented that they weren't sure the Colloquium could be credited with this idea, since certain committee members had favored it for some time. The data and opinions from the Colloquium certainly supported this idea, however.

3. Regarding meetings. The LRPC recommended that AERA experiment with smaller, more frequent meetings by divisions or geographical regions. Also, they urged continued analysis of all meetings. One LRPC member said the latter idea "could be pinned down as resulting from the Colloquium," since the Colloquium demonstrated the value of data about annual meetings and, more generally, the communication structure of the organization.

4. Regarding the social organization of the field. The Colloquium raised questions about the nature of AERA's membership. The LRPC spent a lot of time discussing the divisional structure[8] of AERA, and as one member

---

[7]See "Directions for the American Educational Research Association: Interim Report of the Long-Range Planning Committee," pp. 3-6.

[8]As an Association, AERA is organized into seven divisions. These are: Administration, Curriculum and Objectives, Learning and Instruction, Measurement and Research Methodology, Student Development and Personnel Services, History and Historiography, and Social Context of Education. Each of these divisions is represented on the AERA Council by an elected Vice President.

said, "considering the consequences of alternative ways of organizing AERA, e.g., how they might involve more people from the disciplines." He felt that ideas on the membership and internal structure of AERA were "crystallized through the Colloquium."

B. Relations with the Larger Community

The IRPC made five suggestions on this subject:

1. That the AERA work collaboratively with other groups in an effort to strengthen public and Congressional support for educational research.

2. That the AERA provide for thorough, quick review of educational projects financed by the Federal government.

3. That the AERA form a continuing series of ad hoc committees addressing themselves to educational policy issues which could be illuminated by research processes and findings.

4. That the AERA serve as a kind of clearing house for the identification of individuals willing and able to provide expert testimony before Congress on various educational problems and issues.

5. That the AERA create a standing committee both to examine federal policy for education and to provide the membership with relevant data on federal and other commitments to educational research.

As one committee member noted, "people were aware of the importance [of relations with the larger community, especially the federal government] before, but the Colloquium may have made more converts to the point of view of AERA doing more in the area." This is an example of an attitudinal rather than a cognitive result of the Colloquium.

C. Climate for Research in Schools of Education

The LRPC recommended that the AERA Council appoint a task force to examine the place of and the conditions for educational research in universities offering graduate work in education. As one LRPC member observed, "Hagstrom's paper highlighted the problem of the climate of schools of education. It's not a new problem. People were aware of it before."

D. Educational Development

The LRPC Report barely mentions this issue, which made me wonder if they had considered it. Several members mentioned that they had spent a good deal of time on the problem. One said that he and another member had tried to gather data on developers -- the type of people they were, the work they do, and whether they were in AERA or not. "We had trouble agreeing who they were, what they do. The time we spent couldn't solve the problem. It would still be a good study to do."

In brief, there is remarkable overlap between some of the ideas in the Colloquium and certain LRPC recommendations.

IV. COUNCIL'S DECISIONS ON THE LRPC RECOMMENDATIONS

We will now consider what happened to the themes from the Colloquium, as they were set forth in recommendations from the LRPC, when they were considered by the AERA Council.

A. Community of Scholars

1. The membership category of Fellows. The executive officer cited it as one of the "stickiest wickets" in the whole report. He said the Council might want to refer the idea to a committee. One member of Council said, "We discussed the Fellows in the June Council. I still feel the same

way. I want to know the IRPC's rationale." This same member felt that the Fellows recommendation aimed AERA's priorities completely at scholars. Another Council member suggested that the Council might want to get a much broader reaction from the whole AERA membership on the idea of Fellows. Also, he felt they needed more information about the costs of such a plan. (He seemed to mean both financial and organizational costs.) He felt that the implications of such a suggestion needed to be probed. The Council was clearly not prepared to take action on this recommendation at the December meeting. They felt they should wait to see what the By-Laws Committee recommended about membership. Then they could decide what to do about the Fellows idea.

2. Membership. After considerable discussion of this issue, the Council moved that an Ad Hoc Committee be appointed to suggest priorities in recruitment of new members and that the committee get advice from the divisions of AERA. One Council member asked if the Ad Hoc committee was empowered to act, and what would its functions be, to clarify issues or to come up with recommendations for Council? He suggested changing the wording of the motion to "determine" rather than "to suggest." In short, this issue was not decided by the Council, but referred to a new committee for their consideration.

3. Publications. The Council devoted much discussion to this issue. The AERA staff remarked that it was clear that the Publications Committee did not feel they had a charge to develop a program. Recommendation 3 was amended and passed by Council as follows:[9]

---

[9]See IRPC Interim Report, p. 3, for the original version of this recommendation.

> The Committee recommends that the Association develop with deliberate speed a publications program designed to (1) attract and disseminate the scholarly work of the entire educational research community; (2) provide efficient, informal communication among scholars of like interests within the organization and its several subdivisions; and (3) report and speak about educational research to a larger educational audience. These goals are listed in order of their priority.

This recommendation was referred to the Publications Committee.

Another Council member suggested that studies of publications readership were needed, and he observed that there was slippage with regard to where the responsibility lay for the Garvey and Paisley data. He seemed to be wondering whether the Publication Committee, the Council, or some other group should try to integrate the Garvey and Paisley data into policy-decisions.[10]

In addition, the following LRPC recommendation was referred to the AERA Finance Committee by the Council:

> Recommendation 4: The committee recommends that the Association Council set clear directions for a publications program based on the foregoing recommendations, give the Publications Committee all necessary authority for implementing this program, and take such steps as are needed to assure long-range planning for publications geared to the changing needs of AERA membership.

The Council seemed to feel that the Finance Committee should be involved because many decisions about publications depend on costs and availability of funds.

4. Meetings. The LRPC recommended the following:

> The Annual Meeting increasingly should be directed to advancing the field of educational research through the presentation of exemplar

---

[10]Garvey, op. cit., found that 256 AERA convention papers were submitted to 67 different journals. From this he concluded that the communications mechanisms in the field were not working efficiently, because there was no "core" of journals in the field of research on education which one could read to stay current with the field.

> reports of truly significant research, critical analysis of research developments, symposia on frontier developments, and cross-discipline progress reports.

The Executive Officer reported that these recommendations "were transmitted to the 1970 Program Committee and additional funds were added to the budget to implement some of the recommendations."[11] The Program Committee was asked to report back with a cost estimate. In brief, the Council referred this issue to the Program Committee, and is awaiting action from them before doing anything itself.

In a related vein, the Executive Officer mentioned studying future annual meetings, to find out, among other things, why people come. The major obstacle to doing this is obtaining funds for it. No one on the Council objected to this idea.

5. Organizational structure. Many of the LRPC recommendations about organizational structure were referred by the Council to the By-Laws Committee, specifically items 4-8 and 10-12 in Richard Dershimer's Memo.[12] Furthermore, the Executive Officer suggested that recommendation # 9 in his memo which deals with preparing an outline of formal responsibilities of divisional officers, could be referred to the AERA staff. This was done. Thus the Council allocated responsibility for membership decisions to other bodies.

B. Relations with the Larger Community

Along the lines of the LRPC suggestions, the AERA Council made and passed the following motion:

---

[11]See Richard Dershimer Memo, Appendix I, p. 3.

[12]See Appendix I.

> The Council authorizes the executive officer to explore further the feasibility of establishing an affiliated organization under provision 501c6 (of the IRS code) and report back to the next Council. [This type of organization is free to engage in lobbying activity with the government, since it does not have a tax exempt status. AERA as an organization is not free to lobby per se or it is subject to losing its tax exempt status.]

C. Climate for Research in Schools of Education

The LRPC recommended that

> the Association Council appoint a task force to examine the place of and the conditions for educational research in universities offering graduate studies in the field of education.

The Council had already authorized the President to appoint a Commission to study the consequences of how research funding programs were organized. He felt that the Commission should study the organizational structure of schools of education as well. In view of the existence of this Commission, Council took no further action on this LRPC recommendation.

D. Educational Development

The issue of the relation of development people to AERA was never considered specifically by Council, perhaps because it was not in the LRPC Interim Report. It arose throughout Council's discussion of membership decisions, however, so it is evident they had it in mind, although no concrete action was taken.

E. General Reaction of Council to the LRPC Interim Report

The Council tried to get a member of the LRPC to come to their meeting, and also to get a final version of the LRPC Report for the meeting. According to the Association President, "We didn't get either, through no lack of effort on our part. I feel some disappointment that the next steps were not taken." Another Council member remarked, "I feel a little reluctant

to plunge in on things when the committee hasn't made its final report." The Executive Officer, however, expressed the fear that "a six month delay will bring things to a screeching halt." By this he seemed to mean that the issues which had been raised by the Colloquium and the LRPC were vital to the Association, and that if action were not taken on any of them, the earlier work might have been in vain. This instance is but one example of the vital role played by the Executive Officer in the entire decision-making process. In terms of Figure 1, he was present at every stage of the process. More than that, he served as a very crucial linking person between the steps in the process. As illustrated in the example immediately above, his enthusiasm often made the difference between an idea being considered and its being dropped. As in any large organization where inertia is often the rule rather than the exception, AERA might have done less if it had not been for the Executive Officer's energizing force.

A final general result of the Council's consideration of the LRPC recommendations may have been the development of a new style of operating the Association. After the Council had spent 8-10 hours of the two day meeting discussing the LRPC Interim Report, the Executive Officer observed that the emphasis in the Association had moved away somewhat from the LRPC type of approach for changing the Association, toward a tendency to work for changes and long-range planning through existing AERA committees. In this era of rapid social change, most organizations at least pay lip service to the idea of building mechanisms for adaptation and change into an organization. Whether AERA has succeeded in doing this remains to be seen over time. Also, whether or not this is a direct result of the Colloquium is very difficult to determine, although it is a possibility.

V. PRESENT STATUS OF IDEAS FROM THE COLLOQUIUM

We have seen what happened to some of the ideas which emerged from the Colloquium and the LRPC when they were considered by the Council. We will now consider the final stage in the decision-making sequence, namely, what actions, if any, have resulted from this process. We will consider these ideas in the same sequence as we did in earlier sections.

A. Community of Scholars

1. Publications. The first edition of a new critical Review of Educational Research is being published by AERA. Also, a critical Annual Review of Educational Research will be published by AERA in 1972. The editor will be announced by AERA momentarily. These actions are consistent with the Colloquium emphasis on the importance of an association raising the standards of research in its field, and with the LRPC recommendations in this vein.

In addition, on April 10, 1970, the Publication Committee recommended to the Council that AERA sponsor and develop a new social science journal, which would seek articles with original quantitative data, and also articles by historians and philosophers of education. In their June meeting the Council will consider this recommendation. This is a major decision which is consistent with the data presented by Garvey in the Colloquium, and with the LRPC recommendations on publications.

2. Meetings. There is no real evidence that ideas from the Colloquium or the LRPC are associated with new activities dealing with Association meetings. Unlike the Publications Committee, there is almost complete turnover on the Program Committee, according to the Executive Officer. Therefore, he feels it is more difficult for that Committee to implement

the LRPC recommendations. Also, he feels that the LRPC recommendations on this subject "didn't really turn anybody on." For these reasons, it is not surprising that little new activity seems to have arisen from the Colloquium and LRPC's concern with the meetings of the Association.

3. Organizational structure. One of the major concerns of the new President of AERA is the organizational structure of the Association. He feels that the whole issue needs some clearing up, and he hopes to work on this problem. It would be hard to say that this concern is the result of the Colloquium or the LRPC Report. The Executive Officer feels that the issue of organizational structure must be returned to from time to time. At any rate, this concern is consistent with the emphasis of the Colloquium and the LRPC.

B. Federal Relations

Consonant with the focus of the Colloquium and the suggestions of the LRPC, the Executive Officer has been more active since the Colloquium in informal conversations with key government policymakers. This also is difficult to attribute to either the Colloquium or the LRPC, although one member of the LRPC observed, "People were aware of the importance of the Federal Government before, but the Colloquium may have made more converts to the point of view that AERA should do more in the area." When asked about this, the Executive Officer indicated that he did feel more support for efforts in this direction now than he had in the past. This suggests an indirect effect of the Colloquium on the climate of support which exists for a particular type of action.

C. Climate of Research in Schools of Education

The LRPC Interim Report recommended the formation of a task force to study the climate for research on education in schools and departments of education. The Committee to study this problem has not yet been officially formed, although the idea for such a committee has certainly not been rejected.

D. Educational Development

Although no official action was taken by the LRPC or the Council on the issue of educational development, there is some informal action in this area.

The new President of AERA indicated last January that he would like the Council to spend one of its two days at the June meeting on the problems of educational development -- what it is and what role AERA should play in fostering and improving it. He is also concerned with the role the research person plays in the process of educational development.

E. Summary of Outcomes

Ideas which emerged from the Colloquium are at one of the following four stages:

(1) In some instances real actions have resulted, as, for example, in the case of new AERA publications which use a critical approach.

(2) Sometimes no action has yet been taken, although it has been recommended, as illustrated by the Publications Committee's recommendation for a new social science journal. These ideas can still result in actions.

(3) Other ideas have not yet been acted upon nor have recommendations for action been made. They have not, however, been rejected by the Association. At this point in time they are awaiting further consideration.

An example of this is the idea for a task force on the climate for research on education.

(4) Finally, some ideas were not acted upon, and future action seems unlikely. Recommendations for the annual meeting seem to be at this stage.

In brief, there are certain ideas which emerged from the Colloquium, were incorporated by the LRPC, and accepted by the AERA Council. Some of these have already resulted in action by the Association.

VI. OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE COLLCQUIUM

We have seen some similar ideas in the Colloquium, the LRPC, and in present AERA activities. The question remains, were these ideas the result of the Colloquium or did they simply follow it coincidentally? The recurrence of so many common themes suggests that the Colloquium had some influence on the LRPC's ideas, although it is impossible to prove it conclusively. What we have done so far in this evaluation is to examine several major ideas which appeared in the Colloquium, to see if they reappeared in the later stages of the AERA decision-making process. If they did, we have briefly indicated what happened to these ideas at each stage. Thus we have established some sequence of associations. Association, of course, does not necessarily imply causation. It may suggest it, however, particularly if the associated ideas are so congruent that one has difficulty believing they occurred by chance. We can also examine two other sources of evidence to evaluate the Colloquium. These are comments of the LRPC members and the general impressions of this observer. If all three of these strands of evidence converge, the picture will be more convincing than if we were relying on one strand alone.

When interviewed, LRPC members said it was very hard for them to determine the causal effect of the Colloquium on their recommendations. In general terms, however, their assessments of the Colloquium's worth were quite favorable. The following are all their relevant comments. Comments were deliberately not excluded, because it would be too easy to present a one-sided view that way.

> "The Colloquium was very helpful for getting information about communication processes. It was a very valuable operation."

> "The Colloquium was very interesting. It set the stage for the LRPC. We worked much more effectively than if we hadn't had the Colloquium. The Colloquium stimulated and helped crystallize the ideas of the LRPC. It is hard to see exactly what specific ideas were informed by the Colloquium. This Colloquium was as effective as any could be. I'm skeptical about whether AERA is the place where you can intervene to change the nature or structure of a research field, [although] I've been glad to try to help do this. It won't hurt, and it may help revivify the field."

> "The Coloquium provided useful background. It had an indirect rather than a direct impact on the work of the LRPC. The Storer, Hagstrom, Paisley, and Garvey papers were useful. The papers were short on what could be done. I thought the Colloquium was extremely worthwhile. It was a good expenditure of money. I was impressed with the time and effort which went into the papers which were given at the Colloquium. I thought they were well done. The background, views, and data were all useful. The Colloquium may have converged some of our thinking, helped us find a framework for the salient issues. It saved us a lot of time."

> "I'm not very aware of any explicit residue from the Colloquium. It was not relevant enough to the concerns of the LRPC. There was a kind of a forced marriage between the Colloquium and the LRPC. The papers themselves were too voluminous. Maybe if we had had summaries, reminders, that would have been more helpful. It's my feeling that the Colloquium wasn't that fruitful. It may be my fault for not seeing the relation of the papers to the work of the LRPC. We didn't need the technical data, the analysis of the communication researchers."

> "Having the Colloquium was very much more helpful than not having it would have been, for the purposes of the LRPC. I would fund in an instant anything which added data. The papers presented became data to us. Both the conceptual and the data papers were helpful."

While all but one of these comments presents a generally positive evaluation of the Colloquium's worth, none of them present hard evidence for the indispensability of the Colloquium in the formulation of certain LRPC recommendations. Taken in conjunction with other imperfect evidence, however, this strand may contribute a part to the whole evaluation.

A third strand of evidence is available in the general impressions of this observer. It seems to me that the Colloquium's worth is not only in terms of specific ideas which were adopted by the Association, but, very importantly, in terms of the questions and problems it raised for AERA. Many of these general questions were not new, but the Colloquium reemphasized their importance. Questions about the identity and purpose of AERA as an organization were raised throughout the Colloquium. These questions need to be answered before decisions can be made about recruiting new members, starting new publications, changing the structure of the organization, etc. This strand of evidence deals with a less cognitive domain of effects. It treats changes in people's attitudes as a result of the Colloquium. As such, we cannot measure it objectively on a post hoc basis. It is the strong impression of this observer, however, that AERA policymakers were faced with data and dilemmas which they had previously not had to confront so directly in their proceedings. The result was a sharpening of their awareness of the issues facing the Association. In my opinion, this outcome of the Colloquium was a very positive one. This indirect, attitudinal result is particularly evident in the attitude of the Executive Office, and was observed by both this researcher and by a member of the LRPC. He said, "the Colloquium had powerful effects on the Executive Office of AERA, mobilizing and energizing it."

In brief, our evaluation of the Colloquium's worth depends on three strands of evidence. These are, first, the documented sequence of associations among the stages in the decision-making processes, which may seem too similar to have occurred by chance. Second, the generally positive feelings of LRPC members about the worth of the Colloquium provide evidence in the same direction. Third, this observer's opinion of the positive value of the general questions and problems raised by the Colloquium, which intensified the AERA's self-examination. Taken together, these three strands of evidence suggest the positive value of the Colloquium.

In closing, it is interesting to speculate about why certain ideas seem to have been accepted and acted upon, while others were not. We will now briefly consider this question.

VII. WHY WERE CERTAIN IDEAS FROM THE COLLOQUIUM ACCEPTED AND OTHERS NOT?

A. There are several possible explanations for why ideas were accepted.

1. Sometimes there was a perfect fit between the needs of the Association and the nature of the ideas.[13] For example, the Colloquium's emphasis on the importance of support from the outside community was considered in a positive way by the Association, partly because it had been aware of the importance of this need before. The effect of the Colloquium may have been to intensify the importance.

---

[13]This is similar to Ronald Havelock's "plus plus" model of the dissemination of research in education. See Planning For Innovation, Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

2. Some decision-makers of AERA were repeatedly exposed to ideas over time. They became familiar with certain themes through contact in the Colloquium, LRPC Report, and the Council meeting. For example, the idea of and importance of the reward structure in a social system was new to some people, but they were exposed to it repeatedly over time, and thus assimilated it into their way of thinking about the world.

3. The Executive Officer of AERA became very familiar with the ideas presented in the Colloquium, by his own reading in the literature of the sociology of science, by attending the Colloquium, by reading the papers presented there, and by continually trying to bring these ideas to bear on problems facing AERA. If there was an interpreter of ideas from the Colloquium to the Council, he was it. At the Council meeting, he summarized some of the major themes of the Colloquium for the Council members.

4. The Colloquium raised questions and documented needs which may have been only dimly felt before. They were accepted because they were based on previously unknown data. For example, Hagstrom's paper documented the influence of practitioners on the conduct of research in education. Garvey and Paisley presented hard data on communications patterns which could only have been surmised before.

B. Other ideas were not accepted, or decisions on them were not made, for reasons which may or may not have to do with the intrinsic worth of the ideas themselves. There are several possible explanations for these results.

1. Sometimes there was no advocate for an idea as it passed from one stage to another. For example, no one from the LRPC attended the Council meeting, so there was no one there who could explain their rationale for

certain recommendations. This was particularly apparent in the reaction of the Council to the LRPC's recommendation for a membership category of Fellow.

2. Certain ideas were very "sticky wickets." Decisions, for example, about membership goals, seemed to require more time than the Council had, even though they spent more than eight hours considering the LRPC recommendations.

3. Other decisions needed more data than the policymakers had at the time they had to make the decision. For example, membership direction decisions needed data about the interests and needs of AERA members and of others in research on education. Decisions about publications needed cost figures which were unavailable at the time.

4. The LRPC Report was not considered final. Therefore some Council members were reluctant to take official actions on the recommendations in it.

5. The decision-making structure was not very well integrated. The three-part influence process portrayed in Figure 1 was not as conducive as it might have been to the transmission of new ideas. As one LRPC member observed, "I found the whole exercise fragmented. Communication was difficult between the LRPC and the Council."

VIII. SUMMARY

This evaluation of the impact of the Colloquium on AERA policy-making suggests that a number of ideas emerged from the Colloquium which were relevant to the problems AREA decision-makers face. A number of these ideas reappeared in the LRPC Report and were subsequently considered by the AERA Council. In addition, the Colloquium seemed to raise more sharply

questions of identity and purpose for the AERA. Furthermore, certain ideas and questions raised by the Colloquium exist in present AERA activities, or are being considered by the Association. Finally, we speculated about why certain ideas seem to have been accepted by the Association while others were not.

LIST OF APPENDICES

I. "Recapitulation of the Colloquium"

II. "Directions for the American Educational Research Association: Interim Report of the Long-Range Planning Committee"

III. Richard Dershimer Memorandum of November 25, 1969